PARSONS
LAW FIRM

Professional Limited Liability Company

Grant W. Parsons

Stephen M. Wittbrodt

LAW OFFICE

(231) 929 3113

(231) 929 3036 fax

info@ParsonsLawFirm.net

ParsonsLawFirm.net

520 S. Union Street

P.O. Box 1710

Traverse City, MI

49685-1710

VIA EMAIL
CityCommissioners@traversecitymi.gov

December 14, 2015

Traverse City Historic District Commission
c/o David Weston
TC Planning and Engineering Dept.
400 Boardman Ave.
Traverse City, MI 49684

Re: Park Place Hotel Proposal

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to advise of my interest in the recently-submitted Park Place Hotel development proposal. I would appreciate your inclusion of this letter in your record.

My concern is this: It has been rumored that the Park Place intends a major construction plan that will engage both State Street, Washington Street, the 4C Business District and the Boardman Neighborhood. Nothing is known of the scope or schedule of the plan.

A December 17 vote is scheduled for "Phase 1" of a four phase plan. It appears the first phase is well within standard zoning provisions. It appears that two or more phases (Phase 2 and Phase 3) may require a Special Land Use Permit (SLUP) that may introduce a very significant, new land use profile in that part of town.

The Boardman Neighborhood area is close to my heart. I was born on Wellington Street, my wife was born on Ninth Street, and I was the second Boardman Neighborhood President. I think that neighborhood – which is pinched between Boardman Lake and the foot of West Bay – has a heightened susceptibility to degradation from traffic and commercial intensification. Its survival as one of the City's anchor neighborhoods is probably dependent on your Park Place decision. We all know that the courthouse parking issues have changed the street-scape; the governmental operations had added further burdening; the condo developments have somewhat pinched the area's character.

Traverse City's anchor neighborhoods are loosely linked, and flow well east-to-west. I am concerned that if over-development occurs at the park Place site, it may sever a key east-west neighborhood connection between Boardman and Central Neighborhood. It may also intensify the Boardman Avenue north-south connection and start to allow commercial traffic to infiltrate the eastward State Street homes and Washington Street homes.

The City's anchor neighborhoods create the City's character, its crime control, its citizen involvement, and its overall quality control. Neighborhood residents are the City's quality-of-life enforcers. Preserving the City's anchor neighborhoods is going to be a fight from here on out. I hope that fight is at the core of your expertise and interest. If you don't take the lead, who else will?

I am writing to request you ask the developer(s) to disclose the anticipated scope of the Park Place project, prior to your vote on Phase 1.

If land use planning is fragmented, a piece of a proposal may be approved without considering the entire plan's over-arching scope and impact. Approval of a small piece may create a false expectation on the part of the developer that the entire plan is headed for approval. Later, if the more intense phases are introduced "on the fly", it may create another tall buildings controversy. The public and the developer may feel misled, and the City may be caught in the middle.

Please analyze this project holistically. Wait to vote on Phase 1 until the entire project is disclosed – not the details, but the general scale and density – so the public is truly engaged from the start.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Grant W. Parsons

GWP:pm
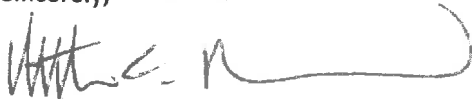
cc: Bob Otwell

December 15, 2015

Eric P. Helzer, EDFP
Advanced Redevelopment Solutions
e. ephelzer@msn.com
c. 517.648.2434

RE: 326 State Street –No HDC Approval Required

Eric,

Just a note to bring you up to date on the Historic District review status of our project. Per my meeting with David Weston, Traverse City Zoning Administrator last week, the 326 State Street building is not in the Historic District and since the SLUP process does not require a HDC approval nor do any other city agencies, we don't have to go. No HDC approval is required for this one.

Sincerely,

Kenneth C. Richmond

Cc: David Weston

We have an incredible building in our Park Place Hotel. The "Dome" structure that is somewhat iconic for its longevity was really designed to last only five years; that was in 1965. Not only are the systems incredibly inefficient and wasteful by today's energy standards, but the reality is that this building offers little in the way of modern conveniences that meeting planners expect. There isn't a public address system on the market today that will take the dome effect out of the dome.

The building, because of its shape is not divisible with any real efficiency. Groups on one side of the building can hear conversations 180 degrees across the entire floor as if the person were talking to them. It's created more than one incident when someone sitting at the back of the room had not so nice comments about the bride's dress.

It's become increasingly more difficult for us to compete with other facilities in the market that have modern meeting and convention space simply because of the constraints offered us in a building of this shape. We know we can offer the city of Traverse City a much better venue for their meeting and conference needs than we are currently.

The Pool building is in dire need of replacement. The building itself is water tight but the windows are clouded indicating failed seals, the roof beams are beginning to show significant rust and the pool itself if kept would need to be torn out, the mechanical system and piping replaced in its entirety and a new roof and wall system installed. To our way of thinking it makes more sense to replace the existing building with one replete with modern mechanical, HVAC and air handling systems. The new pool would be roughly one-half the size of the existing building, and will contain state of the art equipment and be considerably more eco-friendly.
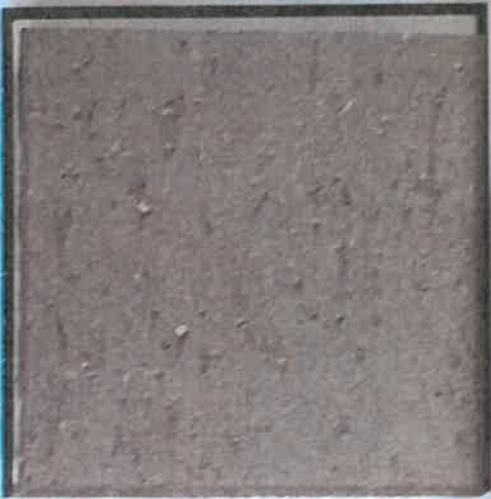
LIGHT SANDSTONE

CAST STONE "SAND STONE"

DARK SANDSTONE

CAST STONE "BUFF"

PARK PLACE POOL & CONVENTION CENTER

EXTERIOR MATERIALS 12.17.2015